

11/12/69

Dear L.A.:

Writing Penn is worse than a futility. Perhaps it is the same writing you, but I hope not. In any event, I owe it to both of us that I make another try.

I've spent most of the day in a mechanical chore that doesn't require intensive concentration, taping in corrections in my best writing, preparing it for the unlikely offset reproduction. Under such circumstances, and especially when one has multitudinous problems, the mind does wander. Too often it turns to worries, and of these we all have a full supply.

At the time I saw you a year ago- in fact, a year ago tonight- I was not well. Several days later, when I went back to N.O. at Jim's request rather than returning home, as scheduled, I blacked out temporarily, at Matt's. I didn't know it then, but two things happened: I hurt a knee when I fell out and my nerves were getting in bad shape. Since then both have deteriorated. Now that we understand what is involved, I think I'm getting my nerves in better shape, but gradually I have less use of my knees, from whatever it is. The diagnosis is arthritis. Though slowed down considerably, from necessity and by order, I have done two books this year, the longer about 200,000 words.

Through all of this we have had no income save the pittance Lil makes from three months as a Block tax consultant. That will not begin again for two months. We just keep going further into debt, which is a hell of a way to live at best and worst when there is no income.

Meanwhile, because from several years ago we are due a tax refund (so inconsistent with our recent records it is only natural Uncle Sam had doubts), we are undergoing a full field audit. And I do mean full! They have been going over the books carefully and spot-checking the substantiation. There has been an interruption because they decided to write someone with whom we had dealings for more information. Among the things that make it look bad are the accounts receivable. There are so many who have asked me to go speak, promising to pay my expenses and then didn't, so many who have bought books and not paid for them, I think were I the IRS auditor, I'd be inclined to have suspicions. So, I do not know how long that will continue, but it is not good when our nerves are in bad shape from other and from continuing problems.

I have continued investigating and the results include perhaps the most important things to date. I've got some of what was destroyed and receipts for the destructions of other evidence (please, make no mention of this at all). If I do no more research and investigation, I've got more than enough for several years of the most intensive writing. Those who have seen it regard it as really significant. God knows when or how it will see the light of day, but I will, at least, prepare it.

You (both) will never know how utterly wrong Penn was, a year ago and in the subsequent nestiness. Even though I was sick, I worked as never before helping prepare for the New Orleans trial, and the carbons here will show you if Penn did not learn it in N.O. There were a number of reasons why I wasn't there. I had to go back to DC for that trial, and I simply not only did not have the fare back, I also had no place to stay. Matt had arranged two rooms for me, but there wasn't a stick of anything in them and, unlike a previous trip to N.O., where in 15 days I had but four meals, having lost 30 pounds I could not dare that when I was unwell to begin with. With no provision for food, heat or even a pad, aside from the other compelling factors, I simply could not be there. So, instead I was home and wrote another book during the trial. Much of this, if Penn is still off on his kick so strange for him, Matt can confirm.

Penn and Jim have one thing in common: they have an infinite capacity for infinite trust in the wrong people. We have all suffered with Jim for his. I hope you both do not suffer for yours. Most of what you have carried I do not see, Penn having cut me off (and telling others it was because I didn't pay for the subscription when you owed me about \$150.00). But occasionally someone send me a clipping, and with absolutely no possibility of personal gain, I tell you with absolute firmness you are being fed bad stuff. I know Penn will not believe this, and I do not know whether you will or not, but I do owe it to you to tell you what seems to be entirely without doubt, for whatever benefit you can gain from the information. A publisher can be a very vulnerable person. He can be both tied up and bled rather effectively (as I found out from that rotten Bringuier). You will live long enough to learn two things about this: I am right and I have helped you in ways you cannot guess.

Most of the summer soldiers are finding perpetual summer. Some of the others are engaging in the foulest internecine warfare, backstabbing and things like that, and have succeeded in turning off some of those relatively new who had done work. Others are forging ahead, and considering the power of the opposition, in terms of knowledge are making real progress. The climate is such nothing can now be done with it, but that doesn't mean it mustn't be done, rather, prepared...and strange things happens to those who despite the best of intentions, turn out to be nothing but redundancies.

I cannot tell you how Penn's last letter, which you may or may not have seen, disturbed me. It was so unlike him. It was both irrational and dishonest, and this is not the Penn I knew. I could only conclude that the pressures had taken their toll on his nerves, too.

In any event, as my mind wandered today, it several times came to you two for different reasons, and before retiring I decided to write you.

I also want to ask that you pay the money you owe me. It is an urgent need for us, as it has always been but now is more so. If Penn were right in that inconceivable belief that I am some kind of enemy agent, it would not in any way alter the fact that you do owe me this money. If, as I had thought, you were not in a position to pay it, that would be one thing. It is apparent this is not the case. I do hope you will send us a check for, as I repeat, our need is really great.

Jess Garry, I hear, has written a book. Now one hereabouts knows anything about it. If you'd let me know the name and publisher, I'd appreciate it. He was on TV in NYC and apparently said there is no evidence LHO was ever in that sixth-floor window. I'm trying to get either a tape or a transcript, but he may also have said that down there.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg